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and the equally distinct mention (Neh. xii. 26) of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Joiakim, the father of Eliashib, as contemporaries. In the face of all these difficulties, M. de Sauley does not hesitate to follow the lead of Josephus, — whose books, as he acknowledges, swarm with anachronisms, — and we must consider it as ironical when he says, speaking of Eliashib: “*Nous nous inclinons d'ailleurs devant le texte biblique.*” We, on our part, profess no undue reverence for texts, but we would sacrifice none that are intrinsically credible, in order to save the credit of a narrative of Josephus.

The most valuable contribution to archæological discovery contained in the monograph before us is, we believe, the digression, at its close, concerning the age of the ruins of Arak-el-Emir, or Kasr-el-Aabed, which bear in two inscriptions, lately deciphered by Dr. Levy of Breslau, the name of Tobiah, who appears to be the Ammonite *ebed* of that name, — the associate of Sanballat, — and the history of whose descendants M. de Sauley traces in an ingenious way. But want of space compels us to refer our readers to the little book itself.

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3. — *Travels in the East Indian Archipelago.* By ALFRED S. BICKMORE, M. A., etc. New York: D: Appleton & Co. 1869. 8vo. pp. 553.

NEXT to the pleasure of visiting foreign countries, and especially those but little known, is the enjoyment of the traveller in telling his adventures; but the small company of travellers who give as much pleasure to their listeners as to themselves does not increase rapidly in these days of easy transit. Now, more than ever, is it necessary to prepare for a scientific journey by careful study and faithful training, if the result is to be of real value. It is so easy to visit regions once almost inaccessible, that many of our travelling countrymen, aiming at a reputation once purchased only by patient, brave, self-sacrificing, intelligent work, imagine themselves called upon to be Humboldt's successors, and for a time enjoy a cheaply purchased honor.

A private exploring expedition is usually far more successful than the cumbrous armies or navies governments commonly send out, and the greater part of the known species, both of plants and animals, have been discovered through the enterprise of expeditions consisting of one or two devoted students of nature, who have gone forth to new fields, as did the disciples of Linnæus, not for pecuniary advantage or for fame, but with the single purpose of advancing science. Knowing the advantages of individual labor in the world-wide field of geographical

exploration, we should not have been surprised had Cambridge sent out a pupil whose discoveries or observations, even in so accessible a region as the East Indian Archipelago, would have added much to the store of knowledge which Rumphius, Valentyn, Reinwardt, Junghuhn, Marsden, Raffles, and Crawfurd have collected during the past century and a half. We had hoped to find something new in the results of an exploration of such a region by one who had been the pupil of so distinguished an instructor as Agassiz; but the volume before us is scarcely more than a record of neglected opportunities. And yet, as Murchison says, it is a very readable book, containing many vivid pictures of the tropical scenery cold New-Englanders like because they cannot fully appreciate it. It is because the book offers so much that is interesting and attractive to the general reader, that its blemishes are worthy of notice.

Although professedly a record of the travels of a scientific man, — a member of many learned societies, — the volume before us might be mistaken for the work of a mere commercial traveller, whose interest in science extended only to the price of shells and rare bird-skins, so completely has the author concealed his real love of Nature and devotion to her service. Who would see an ardent naturalist in Mr. Bickmore's description of his shell-gathering — the prime object of his expedition? Scientific collectors will be surprised to learn that instead of going out on the coral reefs which he describes with so much truth, or joining the native fishermen on their excursions, Mr. Bickmore, on coming to a village, had the official drum beaten, and notice given to the shell-pedlers and others interested that he was ready to deal with them. He then seated himself behind a table, in some public place, and, as the shells were produced, placed beside them what he considered an equivalent, and pronouncing the *Ina atau itu* ("this or that"), concluded the bargain. For the localities of the shells he was dependent on the inaccurate reports of a people whose language he understood but imperfectly. He had no means of knowing at what depth the animals lived, nor of noting the many little facts an actual collector considers important. This is the more remarkable, since by his own account he was once very successful in collecting on a coral-reef. Although fault may be found with his method, his frankness in describing it is commendable, and the very large and interesting collection sent to this country seems to have been considered very valuable by those who have paid generous prices for the duplicates. Although shells were the principal object of the expedition, birds were by no means neglected; but, so far as we can judge by the book, botany was wholly ignored and geology received little attention.

It is hard to repress a feeling of great disappointment, when Mr. Bickmore enlarges upon his singular facilities for travelling, the letters he carried to and from the officers of government best able to forward all his plans, and the opportunities which absolutely seemed to drift in his way. Geologists and botanists might envy him his opportunities, but hardly his achievements.

One of the most amusing features of Mr. Bickmore's narrative is his apparent unconsciousness that much of what he saw for the first time is an old story to the thousands who yearly pass through the Straits of Molucca on their way to and from China. That most common amusement in the tropical seas, of diving for any bright coin, fills him with wonder, and he rather unadvisedly declares the skill exhibited "quite as wonderful as is shown by any of the natives in the South Seas." When a native adopts that very common Polynesian custom of making a raft of cocoa-nuts, he seems to give the man credit for a new invention. A volcano only 2,321 feet high presents difficulties almost surpassing those of the ascent of Mont Blanc. These are, however, unimportant mistakes that one might easily make on a first introduction to the wonders of the tropics; but the mistakes, or misstatements, in regard to several botanical matters might seriously mislead a reader, as when, for example, our author asserts that the *pandanus*, or screw-pine, "may be correctly described as a trunk with branches at both ends," making no distinction between branches and aerial roots; or when he says that the banana "corresponds well to the tree that yielded her fruit every month," when in truth the plant bears fruit but once and then withers. Again, in speaking of a famous prophet or teacher, Nabiata, he mentions the rite of circumcision introduced by him as an indication that Nabiata was a Mohammedan, apparently unaware that the custom was widely prevalent in Polynesia long before the advent of this prophet, and indeed, far from being confined to Hebrews and Mohammedans, is probably practised by more than half of the inhabitants of the world.

But we may hasten over these defects in an interesting volume, regretting the crude arrangement of the materials, the unsystematic interpolation of nearly forty pages of historical matter, often neither new nor explanatory, and the disagreeable prominence given to the author in the foreground of all his most interesting pictures. We may pardon him his dread of earthquakes and volcanoes, and the frequent allusions to his service in the war of the Rebellion, in consideration of the gallantry he displayed in a combat with a gigantic python. This was housed in a box eighteen inches long and a foot wide and deep, one side being of slats. Not liking these narrow quarters, the ser-

pent came out soon after being placed on board the ship in which our author left the scene of so many adventures, and like the genius in the Arabian tale of the Fisherman, when once out of the box, expanded into such a huge monster that the whole crew of the vessel drew off in mortal terror. Even the captain, armed with two revolvers, could not trust his trembling hand to shoot the python. Mr. Bickmore alone was cool and self-possessed, and in the coolest and airiest of costumes advanced to the conflict. "I felt the blood chill in my veins," he confesses, "as for an instant we glanced into each other's eyes, and both instinctively realized that one of us two must die on that spot." All but exhausted, he is at last about to succumb, when an axe is handed him and he slays the reptile. Tugging his vanquished enemy across the deck, he heaves him into the sea, and then sails on to the "great empire of China, where I travelled for a year, and passed through more continued dangers and yet greater hardships than in the East Indian Archipelago."

With these defects are mingled many interesting and well-told narratives, and certainly the author has exhibited considerable patience and perseverance in concealing the enthusiasm which doubtless forms an important part of his character as an explorer. We shall look with interest for a continuation of his travels in China, where he visited many places seldom described.

4.—*The Ring and the Book.* By ROBERT BROWNING, M. A. Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co. 1869. 2 vols. 12mo.

A WELL-KNOWN editor says that half the value of a newspaper leader is in its heading, or, if it have no heading, in its opening sentence. "The Ring and The Book,"—had ever poem a lovelier name? The costliest metal, the perfect shape, the dearest human affection,—gold, the circle, love,—are all suggested by the words, "The Ring." And "The Book," what is it but an image of the spiritual essence, stamped upon an alien element?

"Do you see this Ring?

'T is Rome-work made to match

(By Castellani's imitative craft)

Etrurian circlets found, some happy morn,

After a dropping April; found alive

Spark-like 'mid unearthed slope-side fig-tree roots

That roof old fombs at Chussi: soft, you see,

Yet crisp as jewel-cutting."